operation have been modernised including use of Simulators for training of drivers.

12. Refresher courses regularly organised at specified intervals.

13. Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.

14. Periodical safety drivers are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.

Uneconomic Railway Lines

425. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a survey has been made recently to identify uneconomic lines run by the Indian Railways;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether rail services on these lines are being stopped; and

(d) if so, how the Government is going to ensure that the economy of such areas is not adversely affected by withdrawal of railway services?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) No survey is done. However, a review of financial results is undertaken every year to identify the Uneconomic Branch Lines run by the Indian Railways.

(b) There were 115 Uneconomic Branch Lines and 9 New Lines which incurred an aggregate loss of Rs. 225.67 crores during 1995-96.

(c) and (d) Railway services on the Uneconomic Lines are generally not being stopped. While taking any final decision in this regard, the Railways carefully consider all aspects of the matter, keeping in view the traffic potential, the convenience of the local population, availability of alternative mode of transport etc. Concurrence of the State Government concerned is also obtained before a decision to close the Uneconomic line and rail services thereof is taken.

CAG s observation regarding mismanagement in Railways

426. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has blamed the Railways for mismanagement in procurement, maintenance and utilisation of coaches and machinery for Metro Railway in Calcutta;

(b) if so, whether any responsibility has been fixed for committing such lapses, and disciplinary proceedings initiated against such officials;

(c) what is the extent of financial loss as a result of this mismanagement; and

(d) whether any precautions are being taken now to avoid recurrences of such a state of affairs in the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) In his report for the year ended 31-3-1996, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has made certain observations regarding unproductive investment in the procurement maintenance and utilisation of coaches and machinery for Metro Railway, Calcutta. The same are under examination.

Withdrawal of free railway pass facilities from award winners

427. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:
SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was any proposal mooted by Railway Board to withdraw the facilities of free passes to Arjuna award winners, recipient of gallantry awards including widows of award winners; if so, the back-ground of this proposal and the present position;